No. 690 Twopence April, 1961

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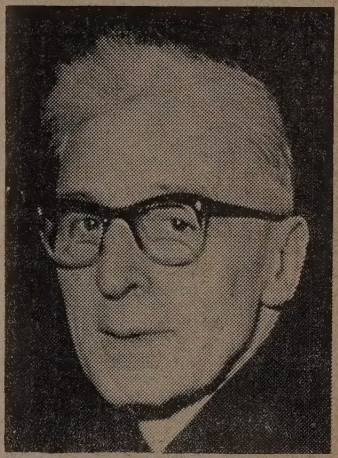
THE
UNITARIAN
A MAGAZINE FOR FREE CHRISTIANS

THE G.A. MEETINGS

A MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

The Assembly makes a welcome visit to Manchester over the period, April 11th to 14th. Its last visit to the city was in the dark days of 1943 and yet those were good meetings and at them was launched the Commission on the Work of the Churches out of whose labours came the £100,000 Appeal Fund and many other recommendations which have done much to help us in the ensuing years.

This April we shall meet in a very different atmosphere and many serious-minded people are definitely worried about our future as an organised voice of liberal religion. Let us not be depressed, however, for days of trial are also days of challenge and of opportunity. We need more ministers, we need larger funds, but above all else we need to believe in our message and ourselves as capable of spreading it further. It is frustration and uncertainty about the importance of the task that prevents our getting more recruits for the ministry, and about these things we can all do something ourselves. So why not come to the meetings and make yourself better informed of what we are trying to do, and then go away inspired to labour loyally, hard and patiently for the future witness of our free faith? If Manchester lives up to tradition we shall all go home feeling better for being there and the more of us who are there the greater will be the sense of exhilaration.



WHO'S WHO

G.A., 1961
by Arthur Peacock

On Tuesday, April 11th, the 1961 General Assembly meetings begin in Manchester. The various events of the week will be centred at Monton, Brookfield, Cross Street and the Lesser Free Trade Hall. The wise delegate will take a careful look at the programme when it appears to ensure that he turns up at the right place at the right time.

Who is taking part? The Incoming President will be the Rev. J. Harry Smith (pictured above) of Gee Cross, Hyde, Cheshire. He is a minister with a long record of quiet and patient service, one of the original "Pioneer Preachers" to whom the Unitarian Church owes so much. In previous years he has received

similar honour from colleagues in the Sunday School Association and brethren in the Ministerial Fellowship.

Preacher at the anniversary service at Monton is the Rev. Dr. Philip N. Tindall who has served the Ancient Chapel at Toxteth, Liverpool, since 1953. Mr. Tindall is one of our "scholars," and for some years served on the staff of Manchester College, Oxford. The conduct of this important service will be in the hands of the Rev. E. R. Buckley. Mr. Buckley is one of our Northern Ireland ministers and for some years has been in charge of Ballee and Clough congregations.

At the Social Service Department meeting—it begins at 2 p.m. at Monton on the opening day—"How shall we use our Sundays?" is the theme and it will be introduced by the department's secretary. The Historical Society at their meeting will welcome Mr. J. Hodson, keeper of Mss. in Nottingham University who will be dealing with Presbyterian History. A Newcastle business man, Mr. Herbert Dove, keen layman of the Divine Unity congregation, is the speaker for the National Unitarian Fellowship. His subject will be "Religion in Transition."

"Eleven years in South Africa" is the title announced for the address that the Rev. Magnus Ratter is to give his fellow ministers. Ministers and layfolk will be happy to greet him back again. There will be special opportunity, for on the concluding morning Mr. Ratter will be addressing the Assembly at the International session. Also on the platform will be Dr. Peter Dalbert, of Switzerland. Doubtless he will have something to say to us regarding this year's I.A.R.F. conference.

No "Who's Who" of Assembly week would be complete without reference to those taking part in the Youth Meeting. In the chair on this occasion will be Mr. Alan Curran, well-known member of U.Y.P.L. and secretary of the Northern Sunday School Federation. Speaker will be the Rev. Bruce Findlow, B.A., of Edinburgh, and his subject "Something to tell the world—and now."

At the Women's League meeting Miss Higginson, M.A., Headmistress of Bolton Girl's Grammar School will talk on "The Grammar School's Education For Life."

As usual the Essex Hall Lecture and a public meeting find place in the programme. The former will be given by Dr. Russell Davis, Reader in Medical Psychology at Cambridge University, Mr. Davis' subject will be "Alienation and Fellowship." Mr. and Mrs. Davis will be spending the whole of the four days with the Assembly. They will be very welcome.

"The Unitarian Church; its Challenge for to-day" is the subject for the public meeting and addressing themselves to this will be three well-known Unitarians. Miss June Bell, Mr. M. Grundy and the Rev. C. H. Bartlett.

These items by no means represent all the fixtures on the programme. They are chosen to indicate the variety of subjects that will be covered during the week, to tell of some of the people taking part—quite a number new to the Assembly platform—and to suggest that there is every indication that Unitarians in Manchester in April are going to have a stimulating time.

EASTER'S GUESS

By Martin Hall

(Ecclesiastes, chapter 2, verse 1) "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days." Bottles thrown into the water have a way of turning up again. Words learnt in childhood are found again unexpectedly upon our lips. Scenes familiar to us in early years draw us back to them in after years. The rainbow, met as a child, gives the heart a lift when it spans the sky of our adult life. And ducks—yes, even ducks, for whom ages

go our mothers diced the slice of read, putting the squares for us into a well-hugged paper bag, still, with a friendly cluck, make a path to us across the pond in the park as in the days our childhood used to know." About life there is a connectedness, a sense of "being bound each to each," which men of insight have found to be one of the most delightful qualities it holds.

On a bleak December day I took stick and, in dogged mood, assisted hundreds of small daffodil bulbs, kindly given to me, into cold unprepossessing mud. "He that sows in tears," the Book of Psalms tells us, "shall reap in joy" Now, as I write, the ground lies thronged with spears of green. By the time you read this, I expect a crowd of laughing daffodils about my house. Things do have a way of cropping up again in this life; and if the Americans should put a man into space, we have reason to hope that he too will blossom again in some capsule recovered from the sea. Easter is a time which proclaims that if man should go through some incredible revolution, and undergo apparent destruction in the process, yet his spirit shall come through and, indomitable it shall ride again the main. This world is an incredible place. Life springs out of apparent death. Order marches in the stars at night. Bottles sail the seas. Childhood passes, but rainbows survive. Away from the dried river-bed bread is annually renewed. . ."and having borne a little chastening, they shall receive great good; because God made trial of them, and found them worthy of himself." Perhaps earth's spiritual bread is also immortal wheat. Easter's guess is that Goodness too in this world lives again.

CHILDREN'S CORNER

FESTIVAL TIME

Hello, everyone, this is Raymond. You know, I *do* get stuck with some things.

D'you remember last year, I got involved in our District Sunday Schools' Spring Festival of Arts and Crafts and had to sing? Well, they caught me again this time and I couldn't get out of it. But I got out of singing; I had to recite instead.

I was in a 12-14 age group and had to do something called "A Song of Springtime." I *ask* you! I had words with Mum about it.

"Why can't I do something like 'The Loss of the Royal George'," I said, and began:

"Toll for the Brave! The brave that are no more! All sunk beneath the wave—."

"Yes, Raymond, all right," Mum broke in; but I wasn't to be outdone. I began again:

"The Burial of Sir John Moore at Corunna.

"Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note, As his corpse to the rampart we hurried;"

I thought I was doing quite well, but Mum didn't seem to agree.

"Raymond," she said gently, "the piece is called 'A Song of Springtime'."

"I know," I replied, "but I prefer the others. What's wrong with them?"

"Nothing's wrong with them," Mum said, "except that perhaps they're a bit gloomy. For Spring you want a happier piece; and that's what you've got. I'm sure you'll do it well."

When Mum says that, that's all there is to it. She knows I'll do as well as I can, but I made one last effort.

"Why is it called a Song?" I inquired. "I'm supposed to say it, not sing it."

It did no good. Mum explained and I still had to learn it; and what d'you think happened? No, I didn't win. I came third; but I was only four marks behind the winner.

Oh, and if *you* are taking part in *your* Spring Festival—good luck!

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THE BEATITUDES

From the New English Bible

How blest are those who know that they are poor; the kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

How blest are the sorrowful; they shall find consolation.

How blest are those of a gentle spirit; they shall have the earth for their possession.

How blest are those that hunger and thirst to see right prevail; they shall be satisfied.

How blest are those who show mercy; mercy shall be shown to them.

How blest are those whose hearts are pure; they shall see God.

How blest are the peace-makers; God shall call them his sons.

How blest are those who have suffered presecution for the cause of right; the kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

Matthew 5, iii-x.

JAMES OR PAUL?

By T. W. Roberts

We know that the late Rev. Dr. Alfred Hall believed most confidently in Immortality. Therefore one who saw him with the full vigour of his mid-fifties from the "Gaskell" Pew in the gallery, deliver in 1929 the Inaugural Address to the General Assembly at Cross Street Chapel, is sure that his spirit will be with the General Assembly which will meet again this year at Cross Street, and one can hardly realise that the very youthful minister who on that occasion gave out notices in regard to hospitality of delegates would have now just completed his term of office as ex-President of the General Assembly.

There was always close association between Cross Street, Strangeways and Upper Brook Street (where C. P. Scott of the Guardian was a member). Strangeways Church was attended by the family of Sir W. H. Talbot, Town Clerk of Manchester, who went daily to the Town Hall from his house in Cheetham Hill in an old four-wheeled growler, and became the doyen of his profession long after the church was closed in 1903, owing to industrial development.

Delegates travelling from Cross Street to the College in Victoria Park will pass the Upper Brook Street Church which was sold to the Welsh Baptist Community in 1920. This was a tragedy which should be remembered by those who speak of the "missing years" and the lack of leadership, because forty-four young men from that congregation who promised to be future leaders joined the forces in 1915, and those who survived came back to find the Church Services suspended and the Church closed.

Through the late Alderman Harry Rawson, J.P., there was a strong link between Cross Street and the Monton Church, where the General Assembly will also be meeting this year. The graves of the Dendy and Agate families may be found in the surrounding graveyard.

In the Albert Square, adjacent to Cross Street stands the Memorial Hall, built to commemorate the ejection of the Non-Conforming Ministers in the 1660's, mainly by the joint efforts of the Ministers of Cross Street and Strangeways Chapels, the Revs. William Gaskell and J. Relly Beard, and their congregations.

A perusal of an old Cross Street Chapel Calendar for October, 1920, shows that a demonstration was held there on September 18th, to celebrate the "Mayflower" Tercentenary, at which there were one thousand present, both ground-floor and gallery being packed. Music was provided by a large choir under the direction of Dr. Keighley, and Dr. Rendel Harris presided over the proceedings.

The obituary notice of the late Dr. Alfred Hall said he was "Always Missionary-minded," and he was a tower of strength in the Van Mission Days. The General Assembly of 1961 will of course be seriously considering the ministerial resources of our denomination, and one hopes that the delegates will capture some of the spirit and inspiration of Dr. Hall, and take strong measures in some attempt to regain the ground lost by the "missing" generation, and realise that the policy of separatism and isclation in our household of faith means bankruptcy, and also the truth of the late Archbishop William Temple's words that "an isolated Church was a hindrance to Christian work."

It is now seventy years since individual subscribers to the denomination were formed into an Association of Churches in Manchester. There is now very little time to waste. Are we to follow the lead of James, isolated at Jerusalem, or that of Paul of Tarsus?

"If I clear up for 25 G.A.'s do I get the M.B.E.?"

UNITARIANS IN THE NEWS

Unitarians were represented on both the Oxford and Cambridge sides in the recent inter-varsity Lacrosse match. Rodney Linford, of Chorlton, Manchester, played for the winning Oxford team and Barrie Needham, of Altrincham, for Cambridge.

Fifty years ago last February, Mr. and Mrs. Dick Edwards were married at Brook Street Chapel, Knutsford. Mr. Edwards was a blacksmith at the time of his wedding and shod two horses specially for drawing the wedding coach.

The Rev. Arthur Long, of Unity Church, Bolton, has been appointed Secretary of the Bolton Council of Christian Congregations. Mr. Long has served on the executive committee for several years. It is the first time that a Unitarian has held this important post.

The Induction Service for the new London District Association Minister, the Rev. E. D. Davies, will take the place of the Annual Service, and will be held at Essex Hall on Saturday, April 29th.

The Rev. Gordon Stuart has accepted an invitation to becomes minister at Sidmouth when the present minister, the Rev. Harold Whittaker, moves to Evesham later in the year.

Mr. Alan Kirby is to become minister at Glasgow upon the completion of his studies at the end of the present academic year. Another student, Mr. J. McClelland, will become minister at Padiham.

The Rev. Francis Terry has announced that he is to retire from the ministry of Ringwood in order to concentrate upon his writing.

NEWS AND VIEWS

CHURCHES ABROAD

The CAPE TOWN, South Africa, Calendar reports: Although no definite date can yet be given for the arrival of a new minister, your committee are in negotiation with both London and America and are expecting the pulpit to be filled shortly, probably by an American. The position in Britain is very difficult; so many pulpits are vacant and so few ministers available for calling.

Young people of ADELAIDE, Australia, held a Summer Youth Camp during the Christmas period. "Daily visits to the Mount Barker swimming pool made the heat-wave conditions more bearable." The Rev. Tom Wardle and family joined the camp and lead the daily talk and discussions which included such topics as "Is Christianity Finished,?" "Christianity and the Person" and "Christianity and Society."

Mr. Lincoln Gribble is back in his native New Zealand and has been guest preacher at AUCKLAND.

HOME CHURCHES

Evening services at ULLETT ROAD, Liverpool, in February were held in the tea room. Originally this was made necessary by the failure of the electric light in the church, but the opportunity was used to hold services that were "frankly experimental," and the Annual Meeting of the congregation will consider the possibility of making the change a permanent one.

Refugee lunches are being held in CARDIFF Schoolroom each Friday in Lent. The price of a proper lunch is paid for a refugee lunch of

bread and cheese, the profit being sent to aid refugees.

On Tuesdays in Lent whist drives are being held at PONTYPRIDD. This is to meet the request of Anglican whist players who cannot meet in their own hall during Lent.

The local branch of the British Legion has given an American Harmonium to GLANRHONDDA.

The proposed Sunday School extension at PLATT, Manchester, cannot now be built because of legal difficulties. A building committee is giving consideration to various possibilities, including that of conversion to a dual purpose building.

The Annual meeting of the Manchester District branch of the Women's League was held at CROSS STREET Chapel in February and was well attended. The address was given by Mrs. C. H. Bartlett, M.A., J.P., wife of the minister of Cross Street Chapel, on "Standards of Living."

Members of STOCKPORT are being encouraged to buy notepaper with a line sketch of the Church. Proceeds from the paper will defray the delegate expenses of Church people to the I.A.R.F. International Conference in Switzerland. Three delegates will be representing the Church.

A note in the New Gravel Pit

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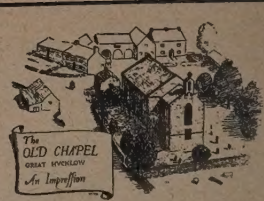
Church, HACKNEY, reads "We thank Mr. Patterson for assisting Mr. Pankhurst with the Senior Club and for many other tasks, like the replacement of broken window panes" —it happens to us all! Almost sixty members attended the Junior Club party. Jennifer Blackborrow and Kathleen Lacey won both Attendance Medals and Club Badges which were presented at the party.

The ministers of Chesterfield and Leicester exchanged pulpits for International Sunday. The Rev. B. Downing showed slides of the Chicago I.A.R.F. at Chesterfield and the Rev. A. W. Vallance took pictures relating to I.A.R.F. to show to Leicester Sunday School, and dealt with the I.A.R.F. at both services.

The "Cheshire Cat," bi-monthly news sheet of the U.Y.P.L.'s in East Cheshire, "grins" again. Volume 1, number 1, contains full and interesting news of Dukinfield, Gee Cross, Stalybridge and Stockport. The U.Y.P.L. at STOCKPORT is newly formed and has already experienced many teething troubles: "For example, where does the money come from and where does it go to?"

HORWICH members heard at their annual meeting that in the first full year of the envelope scheme's operation collections had increased by about 40 per cent. The scheme has been adopted permanently. Prizes awarded by the church chairman, Mr. J. Tyrell, to Horwich Sunday School members voted by their colleagues to be the most "reliable, courteous, friendly and helpful" have been awarded to Carol Johnson and John Tench. Both are U.Y.P.Lers.



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